

befindet sich neben Bildnissen von Euler und König mit biographischen Würdigungen ein 3-strophiges Gedicht von W. Tutte; die letzte Strophe lautet:

“It can’t be done.” Then Euler cries  
“Here comes the Q.E.D.  
Your islands are but vertices,  
And all of odd degree.”

Editionen sind die Grundpfeiler der Mathematikgeschichte. Mit Hilfe des Teubner-Archivs werden wichtige Texte einzeln oder in sinnvoller Zusammenstellung leicht zugänglich gemacht. Die Kommentare erleichtern das Verständnis der oft schwierigen Originaltexte. Es wäre wünschenswert, daß die Reihe Teubner-Archiv auch in Zukunft wächst und gedeiht und in möglichst vielen Bibliotheken und privaten Regalen Aufnahme findet.

**La République avait besoin de savants.** By Janis Langins. Paris (Belin). 1987. 287 pp. 9 illustrations. 90 francs.

**Histoire de l'École Polytechnique.** By Ambroise Fourcy. Introduction and notes by Jean Dhombres. Paris (Belin). 1987. viii + 516 + 198 pp. 140 francs.

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For those readers unfamiliar with the mythology of the French Revolution, it should be explained that Dr. Langins' book derives its title from the words “La République n'a pas besoin de savants” (“the Republic does not need scientists”) alleged, incorrectly, to have been spoken by the chairman of the Revolutionary Tribunal when sentencing Lavoisier to death on 8 May 1794. In point of fact, many scientists and engineers had done work of great importance for the Republic, their services being utilized because the chemists A. F. Fourcroy and L. B. Guyton de Morveau and the engineers C. A. Prieur and Lazare Carnot had entered politics and reached positions enabling them to direct their colleagues into occupations essential for national reform and defense. Among these were the development of methods of producing gunpowder without imported saltpeter, and techniques for rapidly tanning the leather required by the expanding army, extracting copper from redundant church bells and using it to make cannon, and constructing a fleet of hydrogen balloons to carry observers for the army. Until his arrest in November 1793 Lavoisier himself had been working for the government on the development of the metric system, which, it was hoped, would not only replace the many local systems of weights and measures in France but would also be universally accepted and thus simplify international trade.

Yes, the Republic certainly needed scientists, and it also needed civil and military engineers, but where were they to be educated? All colleges and universi-